

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD.*

chosen design was abandoned, and another sought for. The reason advanced for procuring the assistance of another architect was, that they had already lost much time, and Mr. L. had a set of plans ready prepared, which might at once go up to the society.

It only remains for me to make a few remarks on this evidence, and first I would ask: had the society sufficient grounds for causing the rejection of an already adopted design, and the dismissal of an architect already engaged? Some of the objections are too trifling to be worthy of notice; only observing, that it is by no means unusual for an architect to make alterations from his original design, even during the progress of the building; and this is often called an oversight in construction.

The charge of disproportion between the nave and aisles may seem very formidable to those who do not exactly know what it means, and the committee were no doubt surprised to find the design they thought the best, which pleased them the most, was just a jumble of error and disproportion. Now, there are churches built without aisles, and some with them; and there are various proportions between the nave and aisles. I thought I saw some advantage in my proportion, and so it appears thought the committee. If, however, a certain proportion was at all requisite, why was it not mentioned at first. If the error was so very glaring, why was it not sooner discovered?

Supposing the society justified in rejecting the design, then I ask of any competitor, or any one connected with this competition, was it stated in the instructions, or could it be inferred that all the designs sent in were to be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the "Incorporate Society," and guaranteed to pass the examination of the "board?"

There are many churches built where these regulations are not complied with, and which would not be sanctioned by the society. Accordingly, I did not consider myself bound to comply with the regulations of any society, except society in general, and I was a good deal surprised to find that any one had the power to take a building out of my hands which I had fairly won in competition, and which was mine by right of conquest.

I am, Sir, &c., R. H. BENTHAM.

I think it is not unreasonable to ask "A Looker-On" for his authority for some of his statements relating to my design, and I may also observe, that he himself has the "advantage" in being merely "A Looker-On."

THE IRON TRADE.

The extravagant height to which the price of iron had reached has been followed by a reduction equally sudden, although by many persons confidently expected. According to the best authorities the reduction may be taken at 20s. Pigs were stated at the last quarterly meeting to be 6*l.* 10*s.*, they are now to be bought at 5*l.* 10*s.* In merchant-iron there is a reduction of 2*l.* per ton. It appears to be the prevailing opinion that the late extraordinary advance of 2*l.* within three months was artificial, uncalled for, and highly injudicious: it proved very injurious to the iron manufacturers of Staffordshire and Shropshire, unsettled the business of the Birmingham factors, and was the cause of orders to a considerable amount being sent to Germany.

When we reflect that pig-iron was selling in the Clyde at 35*s.* per ton, and has been lately quoted at 5*l.* 10*s.* to 6*l.*, and that bars were selling at 4*l.* 5*s.*, and have recently realized 10*l.*, and even 11*l.*, it may very well be imagined that the iron-masters must have been doing a good trade.

THE SMOKE NUISANCE.—We are told that an economical plan of consuming the smoke made in furnaces is being generally adopted by manufacturers whose premises are situated in crowded localities. The principle is exceedingly simple, consisting merely of a course of brickwork at the back part of the furnace. The space under the boiler is closely built up with brick and mortar, with the exception of two holes left at the bottom, through which the flame is directed; this being quite filled by the flame, the smoke which occupies the other space is intercepted by the brick-work, and brought back upon the fire, where it is consumed, and a small quantity of white vapour only escapes into the atmosphere.

HADDON HALL, like many other magnificent abodes, appears, on close examination, evidently built when comfort was not a peculiarity of art in household construction. The doors are very rudely contrived, except when picturesque effect is the object; few fit at all close, and their fastenings are nothing better than wooden bolts, clumsy bars, or iron hasps. To conceal these defects, and exclude draughts of air, tapestry was put up, which had to be lifted in order to pass in or out; and when it was necessary to hold back these hangings, there were great iron hooks fixed for the purpose. All the principal rooms, except the gallery, were hung with loose arras, and their doors were concealed behind.

The universal rage for building in the sixteenth century (felt by no one more than Henry VIII., who built, improved, or completed no less than ten palaces), caused a rapid development of the new style then in process of formation—the Tudor Gothic. This style was in effect the latest form of the ecclesiastical Gothic, but modified by the necessities and proprieties of a domestic residence. Thus, more light was required for a room than for the interior of a chapel or a church; so the fronts of houses became one vast expanse of glass. "You shall have sometimes fair houses so full of glass, that one cannot tell where to come to be out of the sun or cold" (Bacon). Chimneys of all shapes and sizes, and some of them exceedingly ornamental, sprang up. But in Elizabeth's time a new element came into operation. Italian art was introduced. Henry VIII., in a spirit of rivalry with Francis of France, had sought to bring foreign artists to England; and though Raffaele and Titian declined the invitation, other eminent men from different parts did come; among them Holbein, the universal artist. Many of the chief buildings erected after the middle of the sixteenth century shew the influence of the Italian architects. Somerset House was built by John of Padua, and became, as the first Italian edifice erected in England, an example for others to follow. But the English architects did not servilely copy them or any other works. They preserved some of their own Tudor-Gothic tastes; they admired, and therefore added something from the Italian; they also admired, and therefore also borrowed from Holbein and the German and Flemish schools, and the result was, unquestionably, magnificence.

As presenting generally a notion of the plan of Elizabethan mansions of the first rank, Buckhurst House, Sussex, may be usefully studied. This was built about 1560 by the author of the glorious poetical induction to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, Lord Buckhurst, afterwards lord treasurer and Earl of Dorset. We regret to say, not only for the sake of the building, but for the associations connected with its author, that Buckhurst has long since disappeared. But magnificent as were these great mansions in their size, arrangement, and general aspect, there was little even in them that would harmonize with our notions of what the interiors should be to correspond with such exteriors.

Walpole justly observes, with regard to the mansions of the sixteenth century, "Space and vastness seem to have made their whole ideas of grandeur; the palaces of the memorable Countess of Shrewsbury are exactly in this style. The apartments are lofty and enormous, and they knew not how to furnish them. Pictures, had they had good ones, would have been lost in chambers of such height; tapestry, their chief moveable, was not commonly perfect enough to be real magnificence. Fretted ceilings, graceful mouldings of windows, and painted glass, the ornaments of the preceding age, were fallen into disuse. Immense lights, composed of bud glass, in diamond panes, cast an air of poverty over their most costly apartments."

Hardwick, in Derbyshire, between Chesterfield and Mansfield, the property of the Duke of Devonshire, is one of the "palaces of the memorable Countess of Shrewsbury," here referred to. A strange story is told in explanation of this lady's building propensities. A tradition, recorded by Walpole, says, the countess was told by a fortune-teller that she

should not die whilst she continued building; so she went on, erecting mansion after mansion, until her proceedings were arrested one winter by a hard frost, which rendered the workmen unable to continue their labours, and then she died. Two or three portraits of the countess, or as she is more popularly called, Bess of Hardwick, are to be found here. The gallery is of the amazing extent of 145 feet, and contains some interesting pictures; among them one of Mary Queen of Scots, whose residence as a prisoner in the mansion has given to it a still higher interest than is attached to the well-known countess its founder. Mary spent a considerable portion of her long nineteen years of imprisonment at Hardwick, during which time she occupied some of her dreary hours by embroidering the black velvet chair-covers that are still preserved in the mansion. Indeed, one of the most delightful features of the place is its perfectly Elizabethan character. Every thing remains unaltered from the days of the two queens—the oppressor and the oppressed.

Of old castles, as well as old churches, we take our leave in the present period. Their uses had passed away. Many of those built in imitation, to a certain extent, of the ancient castellated style, were but superficial imitations, calculated to please the still lingering military tastes of the owners, but utterly unsuited for the real wear and tear of military defence. Indeed, Elizabeth, as well as her father, would no doubt like to have seen the man who would have ventured to have erected a real stronghold in her time. Power enough was reserved for the aristocracy, but it was to be henceforth the power of station and wealth only, whether exercised in public or in private life. So, although castles were erected, and strong ones too, no subjects were the builders. There were to be defences provided, not to facilitate internal warfare, but as a protection from foreign aggression. Henry VIII. caused a chain of fortresses to be raised for the protection of the northern and eastern coasts—as Sandown, and others. To Elizabeth we owe the commencement of the castle named after herself at Jersey, in which Clarendon resided for two years, and wrote a large portion of his "History of the Rebellion." Mount Orgueil, also in Jersey, commanding its situation on a rocky headland that projects forward into the sea, is famous as the prison of Prynne, and the residence of Charles II. during a part of his exile. Upnor Castle, on the Medway, a little below Chatham—now completely in ruins—is distinguished as being one of the last, if not the very last, of those places of defence that were built on the old principles of fortification.

We cannot better take leave of the general subject of castles, than with a few words upon a fortress that formed a most perfect example of the class in all its genuine strength, and sternness, and inconvenience for residence, and which, to the regret of those who like to have something better than mere descriptions of antiquity to rely upon, has been recently much damaged by fire. Naworth stood on the edge of a ravine, had walls of enormous thickness, and was altogether in the style of a castle of the fourteenth century; when all such works were built with the expectation that occasions might arise to test their strength, and with more than expectation—the certainty—where castles like Naworth were concerned. To the strength of wall, and narrowness of window that marked the exterior of such places, must be added, in order to combine their chief characteristics, the dungeons within for prisoners, and the fire-places of the hall, which were really of almost incredible dimensions. That of Naworth was seventeen feet broad.

PROPOSED AERIAL TUNNEL OVER THE MENAI.—Mr. Randall proposed last week, before a committee of the House of Commons, to carry the Chester and Holyhead Railway across the Menai Straits, by means of a huge tube composed of sheet iron, and to support the same midway on the Britannia Rock, thus forming a kind of aerial tunnel, consisting of two spans, each being about 450 feet in length. General Pasley on being questioned as to the merits of the proposition said, that he considered it sound in principle as well as safe in practice. He also was of opinion, that two small tubes, one for each rail, would be preferable to a single large one.

* "Old England, a Pictorial Museum of Antiquities." C. Knight, London.